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A radio talk by W. W. Vincent; chief, Western District, Food and Drug Administration, delivered June 19 through stations KGO, San Francisco, KECA, Los Angeles and KHQ, Spokane, at 9:45 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

My Friends, I speak to you as a representative of the U. S. Government and, as I have already told you, I have been in the game of enforcing the Federal Food and Drugs Act for more than fifteen years. The Food and Drugs Act insures the purity and wholesomeness and honest labeling of the foods you folks use and the purity and proper branding of your drug supplies. In this series of weekly radio talks I am relating some of my personal experiences and telling some of the interesting stories which these experiences have brought to light; this, in order that you may know how your food and drug supplies receive constant protection under the Federal Food and Drugs Act. I also am giving you practical information on how to read food and drug labels.

Recently I told you of the sale of powdered sugar as Acetyl Salicylic Acid, better known as Aspirin, at a price of \$29.16 a pound; also of a man without conscience who transported a carload of rotten salmon a distance almost equal to the circumference of our globe in a vain effort to sell it to his fellow-man. Last week I devoted all our time to label reading. But I promised this week to tell you of a clever importer, an importer who almost succeeded in adulterating every jar of mustard on the retail markets of this country. I also promised to give you an idea of the magnitude of the food business, the largest business in the world.

Even if you exclude that vast volume of raw foods such as milk, eggs, nuts, fruits and vegetables, the value of the annual output of the food industries of this country has in some years exceeded by four times the value of the total output of all our iron and steel mills and likewise four times the value of the output of all our factories making men's, women's and children's clothing. Did you ever stop to consider that more than half the income and energy of a considerable portion of our population is spent to provide food for the family and that more than half of the people of this country are engaged in work connected directly or indirectly with the food business, either in growing, manufacturing, storing, and transporting of food, or in its cooking and serving? With these figures in mind, think for a moment what a Herculean and responsible task is imposed upon the small coterie of men enforcing Food and Drug Laws.

Coming back now to my importing friend, remember I told you he is clever, so clever in fact that he fooled many of our largest spice grinders and manufacturers. Prior to the war period the bulk of the mustard seed used in ground or prepared mustard in this country came from Russia. That source of supply was shut off during the war. Prices rose and a search of world markets failed to reveal a supply adequate to the demands of our trade. This is surprising when you realize that there are over 85 varieties of mustard seed.

In China there is grown a Yellow Rape Seed, sometimes called Cabbage Seed, similar in appearance to Yellow Mustard Seed. It is not used as food

but rather pressed for its oil content. Little or none of the Yellow Rape Seed had ever been imported into the United States. It is the same size, not quite so pungent to taste as Chinese or Japanese Mustard Seed, nor does it contain any volatile oil of mustard, that flavoring principle for which mustard seed is purchased. It would, however, hull and grind like mustard and samples were distributed by the importer to the various mustard manufacturers of the country under the designation Chinese Mustard Seed.

As the available mustard supply was daily becoming less and the price constantly increasing, many mustard manufacturers contracted for large amounts to be delivered over the following year. It was good business for the importer. Hundreds of tons of this seed were available in China at a ridiculously low price but here it brought six or seven cents per pound to the importer. It was easy enough to sell the second manufacturer once the first had become convinced that here was a new mustard seed available in quantity.

The importer, knowing the close scrutiny given to all imported foods and drug products by the U. S. Food Inspection laboratories, realized that his scheme would fail in its inception did he attempt to import that material as Chinese Yellow Mustard Seed. Accordingly, it was imported as Rape Seed, Chinese Yellow Rape Seed, and cleared through the Custom House as such. Upon removal from dock to warehouse it was referred to always as Mustard Seed and the instructions to the warehouse were in terms of mustard seed.

Likewise, when shipments began to move to various parts of the country the railroad billings called for so many sacks of mustard seed. Not only did this misrepresentation entail a violation of the Food and Drugs Act but likewise of the rate rulings of the U. S. Interstate Commerce Commission for mustard seed enjoyed a lower shipping rate than did rape seed. Very few shipments had arrived from the Orient before your Food and Drug office began to wonder why such quantities of a product not heretofore imported should now be coming into the country. I decided to find out and, with a definite record of the amounts of the imported rape seed, went to the warehouse where I secured full information as to the disposition of numerous carloads of what was now being sold and shipped as mustard seed.

But a week or so ensued and the importer began to receive telegrams telling of numerous seizures of his mustard seed at various mustard manufacturing plants throughout the U.S. I have failed to mention that not all the mustard manufacturers were fooled. Some, too clever, had bought the product as rape seed but were going to sell it for mustard. Likewise, those individuals knew that they were enjoying an illegal freight privilege and in reality were guilty of a conspiracy to defeat the Food and Drugs Act. Therefore, it became incumbent upon the importer to protect the so-called reputation of those who knowingly entered into this deception, as well as those who in good faith had purchased the material.

A representative of the concern went to Chicago to defend this product in the Federal court and attempt to convince the jury that the Food and Drug authorities were wrong and the product was a mustard seed. The jury, a body of men gathered from various walks of life, knew nothing of the 87 varieties of mustard seed but they found that your food and drug authorities did know cabbage seed. A food official appeared in court with bandages on

each arm. He explained under oath that on one arm was a real mustard plaster, on the other a plaster prepared from the Chinese Rape Seed. The bandages were removed in the court room. The real mustard plaster had made the arm red and raw; the Rape Seed plaster on the other arm left it white and normal. The jury was convinced.

The cases were finally settled by confessions of judgment in all instances and the product later went to the oil pressing plants. It was not used as a garnish for your picnic sandwiches. I never stopped to compute what the illegal gain would have been to this importing concern had they been successful in merchandising as mustard all the cabbage seed they contracted for in the Orient. It is safe to say, however, that it would have aggregated thousands and thousands of dollars.

By the way, did you ever notice those prepared mustard labels and happen to find that some read "Mustard and Mustard Bran?" Not so long ago they failed to tell you that the bran was there. Mustard bran is valueless as a condiment but it makes a good filler. You should pay less money for a jar of Prepared Mustard and Mustard Bran. It was just a couple of years ago your food and drug agents convicted before a trial jury in Federal Court at San Francisco what we believe was the last of your large prepared mustard manufacturers who was resorting to the addition of mustard hulls or bran in their prepared mustard. I would like to tell you of that case.

Because he interposed clever legal obstacles, it had been impossible to get this manufacturer to trial for a number of years. As a result he had enjoyed a lucrative mustard business, to the detriment of all competitors and your pocketbook. A clever attorney represented this manufacturer. He tried to win his case upon a technicality, by passing financial responsibility to a person who in the meantime had died. The food and drug agent foiled this plan by introducing in court certain income tax returns that firm had made for the year in which the offense was committed. The attorney, too, had talked with certain chemists. He felt he would confuse the jury as to the interpretation of the chemical results. He failed to consider that a photograph of a microscope slide would show the jury just what percent of mustard hulls was present. The court held this adulteration of mustard a rather serious offense and fined the manufacturer accordingly. It will be years, if ever, before that manufacturer's products regain the prestige lost by the exposure of his activities.

Some mustard manufacturers also make an imitation mustard which as a rule contains some mustard seed, perhaps mustard bran, together with starch or a gum. This they color artificially but it is always sold under an imitation label, together with a statement of ingredients. If you read your label you won't get the imitation when you desire the pure product.

Do you know that in the eastern half of the United States this "Read the Label" movement has gained such popularity that various Women's Clubs, housewives' leagues and civic organizations are taking up the question and urging the adoption of the practice by every individual?

Do you know how to read labels? If so, what is mustard flour? What is ground mustard? What is prepared mustard? Never mind the answer. I will tell you. All mustard products come from the seed, of which there are

three general classes: white mustard seed, black mustard seed, and those intermediate in color, namely yellow to brown and red.

As a condiment it is dependent upon its content of volatile oil or other pungent principle. In the black variety there must be six-tenths of one per cent volatile mustard oil present if it comply with the standard.

Ground mustard seed or mustard meal is the unbolted ground mustard seed and conforms to all standards for mustard seed.

Mustard cake is the ground mustard seed or mustard meal from which a portion of the fixed oil has been removed.

Mustard flour or ground mustard or "mustard" as you generally purchase it, is the powder made from mustard seed after the hulls have largely been removed and with or without the removal of a portion of the fixed oil.

Prepared mustards, such as "Old English Style," "Dutch Style," "French Style," are pastes composed of a mixture of ground mustard seed or mustard flour or mustard cake with salt, a vinegar, spices, and with or without sugar or other condiments. The standard does not permit of the inclusion of added mustard bran or starch or vegetable gums.

Turmeric, a spice, sometimes used in prepared mustards, is generally declared upon the label. While its primary purpose is to impart a yellow shade to the product, it actually does not simulate the pure mustard color.

My Friends, should you establish the practice of reading labels, you will find it entertaining, you will find it informative, you will find it profitable. Your retail grocer will be surprised when he can no longer give you something "just as good."

I can conceive that if we consumers begin to question what we are receiving, food manufacturers will give us more information upon the label -- we are buying on faith -- we cannot see the contents of the package --. It would be pleasing, did we know whether the beautifully labeled can of peaches was packed in water or a 40% sugar syrup. Also were the peaches of a "fancy" or "mediocre" quality.

This concludes my second talk. If you are interested in becoming a discriminating buyer of food and drugs, write today to W. F. Vincent, U.S. Food & Drug Laboratory, San Francisco, Calif. Ask for our "Read the Label" information. This week's mailing will include facts on reading of mustard and of canned pea labels. Get your name on the mailing list now. I will be on the air again at this hour next Thursday and in the meantime "Read the Label."